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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

5 October 1949

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM NO. 232

SUBJECT: Significance of Recent Intensified Soviet Action against Tito

The recent action of Czechoslovakia in asking for the recall of the Yugoslav Ambassador in Prague is merely a further step in the current intensification of Soviet pressure on Tito. It is improbable that the Soviet bloc will sever its diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia at this time, since there are other less drastic steps which can be taken by the Kremlin against Tito's Yugoslavia. A complete break would deprive Moscow of its overt contact with internal Yugoslav developments, particularly subversion and Cominform activities, as well as lessen its tactical capabilities for exerting pressure on Tito via diplomatic channels.

A more significant recent development in the "Soviet war of nerves" against Yugoslavia is the increase in the strength of Soviet ground forces on the Yugoslav periphery from a definite 5 to 7, and quite possibly 9 divisions. While the Soviets do not have a sufficient preponderance of readily available military power to quickly subjugate Tito's armed forces, the trend of increasing the strength of Soviet ground forces in that area does increase Soviet military capabilities against Tito on a limited scale. Direct Soviet military aggression is still estimated to be improbable although not impossible, unless the build-up is stepped up to such a point that the number of available divisions on the Yugoslav periphery is 15 or more. The fact that Tito has not regrouped his forces is indicative of Yugoslav dubiousness concerning a quick Soviet military thrust into the Belgrade plain. Furthermore, there is no change in the Soviet Air Force Order of Battle in the area.

The abrogation of friendship treaties between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and Satellites is a third step in the intensification outlined above. Soviet pressure on Yugoslavia will continue to intensify although it is estimated that the Kremlin will exhaust all other means before turning to overt military action. Tito's survival repre-

Note: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, and the Air Force have concurred in this memorandum; for a dissent by the Office of Naval Intelligence, see p. 3.

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sents a paramount threat to Soviet ideological leadership of world Communism. The elimination of the Tito Government as a symbol, therefore, must be a primary objective of Soviet foreign policy. The Soviet program will probably consist in multiplying and intensifying (1) internal subversive and sabotage activities, including the possible assassination of Yugoslavia's leaders; (2) military pressure on the Yugoslav periphery; (3) attempted exploitation of minority and separatist problems with recourse to guerrilla raids from adjoining countries; and (4) a concentrated Soviet satellite propaganda campaign.

The current intensification of Soviet pressure employed against Tito may be activated by the following considerations: (1) the urgent need for definitive expulsion of Tito's group from the Stalinist camp; (2) an attempt to curtail Tito's growing success in injecting the Soviet-Yugoslav problems on an international plane, such as the question of a Yugoslav seat on the Security Council; (3) a possible Soviet attempt, based on the announcement of Soviet possession of atomic power, to capitalize its offensive against Tito.

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DISSENT BY THE OFFICE OF NAVAL INTELLIGENCE

1. The Office of Naval Intelligence dissents from IM-232 in the following respects:

(a) Paragraph 2 - ONI disagrees with the statement that an increase of Soviet ground forces from 5 to 7 divisions is "a more significant development." In addition, the impression is given that direct Soviet military aggression will be probable if and when the Soviet ground forces on the Yugoslav periphery number 15 or more divisions. ONI believes that the presence of 15 or more Soviet divisions on the Yugoslav periphery, while worthy of serious scrutiny, would not in itself indicate a Soviet intention to invade Yugoslavia.

(b) Paragraph 3, line 1 - The abrogation of friendship treaties between Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union and Satellites is described as a "third step" in the intensification of Soviet pressure against Tito. The meaning of "third" in this respect is unclear.

(c) Paragraph 3, line 3 - ... "it is estimated that the Kremlin will exhaust all other means before turning to overt military action." ONI does not believe that the inevitability of overt Soviet military action against Tito can be estimated at this time.

(d) Paragraph 4, line 2 - ONI believes that there is an urgent Soviet need for the elimination of Tito and his group. There is no justification to imply that Tito is still within the Stalinist camp.

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